

## Learning from Bima: A Myth Perspective

Dr. I Nyoman Mustana., S.Kar., M.Hum.<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Sunardi., S.Sn., M.Sn.<sup>2</sup>,  
Sudarsono., S.Kar., M.Si<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Theatre Departement and Post Graduate Departements/ Indonesian Institute of Arts, Indonesia)

<sup>2</sup>(Puppets Departements/ Indonesian Institute of Arts, Indonesia)

<sup>3</sup>(Puppets Departements/ Indonesian Institute of Arts, Indonesia)

**ABSTRACT:** The article entitled "Learning from Bima" in the perspective of a myth is a scientific writing that contains the story of the birth of Bima to the process to get a set of life-guiding beliefs. In the process, many events that are passed through related to the nature of the natural and cultural environment that is not entirely logical or have hidden logic, but require leaps of extra careful logic, because it gets beyond habits that cause myths appear to be irrational. The story that was worked on was Bima character who eventually met Dewaruci, his God. In this research, we used a qualitative method that emphasizes the full involvement of researchers in digging for and collecting data to conduct analysis, as well as compiling reports, and articles. Myth theory is used to reconstruct a symbolic mythological understanding of living energy such as water, wind or its composition that is converted into fire/apui, water/udgata, wind/maruta becoming a symbol of God, namely AUM. The results of the research were descriptive understanding of the use of water, wind, and fire as sources of vital energy for life that can be obtained through samadi.

**KEYWORDS:** Bima, Dewaruci, water, wind, fire

### I. INTRODUCTION

Earth inhabited by humans today is a planet that is constantly in turmoil with various social and cultural changes and radical nature that presents uncertainty in a major crisis of civilization (Bell, Daniel, 1997: 21). But, the talks between layers of the culture of the present and the past are often in the form of mythical stories which at first glance seem irrational, but actually they are rational in the sense that there are thoughts in them that have not been critically examined. It can be an expression of the story of a charismatic legendary hero, the story of gods, superstition, mythological animals or the names of certain wayang figures such as Krishna, Sakuni, or Ramawijaya and Rahwana which are related to the beliefs of the people of a certain place.

Myth is always alive and developing in a particular society. It is an oral tradition that survives and develops in the lives of people throughout the world. Myths are often sacred and pure and are related to supernatural senses that are difficult to prove by scientific methods, so there are illogical and anonymous tendencies like *wayang kulit purwa* (literally 'original wayang'). Nevertheless, myth is useful as a talk to strengthen social connection (Humaeni, 2012: 176). In wayang *Nusantaraperformance*, Bima character can be used as an example of mythical stories, models, codes, and cybernetics or cyberspace that stimulates cultural values that are visualized in forms of behavior through the characters acting in wayang stories. Wayang stimulation affects the mental attitude of the community. Social reality expressed through various imaginary characters can give a vivid picture (Kuntowijoyo, 1987: 135).

Bima became a myth of a powerful figure, because he had amazing strength in terms of physical, mental and spiritual, and was a motivator to strengthen the unity of life for all species on earth to grow and develop according to the nature of each habitat. He was called a motivator, because Bima cared about the natural environment and social environment through spiritual activities such as *tapa*, *berata*, *yoga*, and *samadi*. *Tapa* is a human effort to obtain supernatural powers through hardening of the body, worship and asking for fortune (material things) from God. *Brata* is a restraint of desires (fasting) in a certain period of time according to the purpose. *Yoga* is a process of body and mind (soul) towards physical and spiritual health/soul, and *samadi* is an activity of concentration of the soul (mind and feeling) in prayers that are of mythological sacred values as a way of *manunggaling kaula lan Gusti* or vertical communication between humans and God.

The activities of mythological figures such as Bima used in *wayang* performance stories always transmit the teachings of goodness. The activities carried out by Bima are oriented to the balance and harmony of all ecological levels which are internally dynamic and occupy nature and God as the subject. All three are focused

on the activities of art and culture as human objects that have implications for all beings that live in nature so that happiness and harmony can be achieved with the essence of each life. The reasoning becomes important to be conveyed and responded to, so that Bima as the subject who is placed as a teacher in the perspective of the myth really does not transform into a big narration, which is the expression of thinking of higher self, prestigious, having gaps, and being different in front of others including appreciator (Bell, 2002: 194). If this is the case, it means there is a denial of democratic values based on communal expression. Therefore, in terms of the role, function and dominance of the relational values of Bima figure, it is very urgent as a reference for imagination to increase the dynamics of art that is constantly moving and being moved together with the necessity of cultural inner voice (Humardani, S.D., 1979/1980:50). Thus, the values of art and cultural treasures revealed in wayang art for example, are an endless source to be extracted and absorbed in their essence as a means of personal formation (Wibisana, Singgih. 1972:12).

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Based on these complex social cultural phenomena or realities, three questions emerge as an effort to simplify the process while looking for focal points formulated in the formulation of the problem statements. The three problem statements are as follows.

1. What is Bima's attitude toward himself?
2. What is the attitude of Bima towards other parties?
3. Why does Bima like purity?

The three questions in the formulation of the problem statements are sought answers and explanations in a research based on qualitative methods. Kaelan (2005:5-6) states that qualitative research is emphasized in terms of quality, naturally which involves understanding, concepts, values, and other identities that objectivate. According to Bogdan and Biklen (in Kaelan, 1982: 3), qualitative research concerns humans and their cultural expressions. Qualitative research can also be named phenomenological research, case studies, interpretive, ecological or descriptive. Qualitative research can be carried out by at least one person with a single case (Miles and A. Michael Huberman, 1992:59). Arikunto (1993:115) also emphasizes that case studies are intensive, detailed, and in-depth research of organisms, institutions or symptoms in a particular area with a narrow subject.

Data were collected through interviews with a number of sources, such as Mr. Bambang Suwarno, Kuato, and Sudarsono through the technique of snow ball openly and continuously through focused talks that lead to problem solving efforts faced by Bima in the life process of birth through adult. Literacy study was conducted to start the process until the end of this research to gather a number of information in the form of data in the form of images, documents, and video recordings. Data were mostly collected by the work team on an ongoing basis and were analyzed from the start in focus group discussion (FGD) activities with interdisciplinary literacy discourse to explain complex conceptual maps from diverse data with the supporting capacity of social sciences, cultural studies, religion, art and politics. The creator had the perspectives that that (1) Bima shaped his character, (2) Bima cared about other parties, and (3) Bima acted sacred/pure natures. The creator places these three things which can be assumed as the concept of forming Bima's personality to obtain self-image in order to obtain complete personal authenticity.

## III. THE IDENTITY OF BIMA

From the case of birth, it gives a space of awareness to always build social and cultural integrity, especially in the values of logic, empiricism, ethics, and aesthetics. These four values are needed as active instruments with religious dimensions and minimum standards in welcoming someone's birth. At the level of factual reality, birth is addressed religiously, slowly, but surely, and can be passed through step by step. The purpose of human life, both as individuals and social groups depends on the direction of life force, guiding light, and the rule of law as a navigation form of its implementation (Radhakrishnan, S. 2003:3).

### (1) The Birth of Bima

The earth where humans live is a laboratory of spirits (*atma*). When the spirit occupies the human body, the spirit undergoes the best process of sublimation (purification) through birth. Birth as a human should be used as well as possible. An obsession of being human is an ideal desire because being born as a human is an opportunity to do good (Donder, I Ketut and I Ketut Wisarja, 2009: 195). Therefore, every pair of people would want to have children for the continuity of their dynasty. Pandu in the cursed state was still trying to gain a child. Pandu's first child, Yudistira, was only one year old. Pandu has expressed his will again to Kunti to be given a child who has great strength. Kunti was interested in Pandu's request and gave a positive response, that Pandu wanted Dewa Bayu to be the father of his second child.

The child will bring the truth from the most powerful gods of all gods. When a truth is supported by great power, then no one can match it, because physical strength along with inner strength will bring out tremendous strength. Dewi Kunti accepted with full confidence Prabu Pandu's request. Through the spells and prayers of the Hredaya Dewi Kunti, they worshipped and called on Dewa Bayu. After prostrating to Hyang Agung (the almighty God), the universe was engulfed in darkness, so that the universe was invisible, without nature, beyond reasoning, and was like having a long deep sleep (Donder, I Ketut and I Ketut Wisarja, 2009: 37). After a while, a baby was born from the womb of Kunti, a handsome, mighty and strong child. His body was tall with a round eyeball (Murtana, 1992/1993: 14). As soon as Bima was born, there was a magical sound that this newborn child would be the most amazing and powerful person, his name was Bima (Subramaiam, 2003: 29-30).

Bhima was born wrapped in a placenta that is very hard and difficult to break. Various weapons were tried to break down the placenta, but it was not yet successful (Bambang Suwarna, Kuato, and Sudarsono. Interviews on 6 and 20 July 2019). Batara Bayu helped the birth of Bima because it was born in the form of a wrap. For fourteen years in a pack, like a hermit in a pack (Bambang Suwarno, Kuato, and Sudarsono, an interview on July 25, 2019). He entered Sena's elephant body to give strength to break the amniotic fluid wrapping skin. The way that Batara Bayu Betara did was by causing a wind storm that caused the skin covering the placenta to fly to the coast of Sindureja Kingdom.

Dewi (goddess) Uma with her supernatural powers gave clothes from heaven in the form of a poleng bang bintulu cloth worn as underpant, Candrakirana bracelet, nagasara necklace, or nagabanda necklace, jaroting asem earrings, hair curled in the shape of pudhak sinumpet. By dressing like that, Bima seems to be of good character, handsome, and strong. A character is not enough through its outer appearance, but rather tends to refer to inner attitudes (Dewojati, 2012: 176), such as honest, loyal, open, smooth, rude, responsible and so on.

An elephant named Sena arrived and broke the wrap. Bima was born still having red skin at birth but had shown tremendous strength. Once born Gajah Sena was attacked by Bima, so that fighting between Bima and Gajah Sena was inevitable. As a result of the battle, Sena was killed. The spirit and magic power of Gajah Sena then merged with Bima's body and soul so that the power of Bima multiplied. Bima as the personification of extraordinary, brave and brute strength, but with a golden heart, should have a position as raksha (protector), pelana (guardian), and yogakhsema (welfare) (Radendra, I.B., 2007: 3). Bima has other names such as Bratasena, Werkudara, Bayusuta or Bayusunu. Bratasena is a combination of the word sena which means warrior and barata means barata's descendant. Therefore, Bratasena means warrior of barata, the name of Bima in childhood. Werkudara is derived from the word wrika (Sanskrit) which means that the wolf and the virgin are air or stomach. Werkudara means a person who has a stomach like a wolf. This name was given by Dewi Uma, Betara Guru's wife, the supreme god of heaven (S. Pedit, 1980: 44).

Batara Bayu was also called Hyang Pawaka (wind god), a symbol of strength. Symbols are not only as a medium of understanding but also have the power to give meaning to social reality. Through the process of imaging, the symbol system obtains its abstract power in order to change the meaning and lead the way of having perspective to influence the practice of a person or group (Fashri, 2007: 17). Batara Bayu was the fourth son of Sang Hyang Manik Maya, King of Tribuana with the empress, Dewi Umayi. Batara Bayu was Sang Hyang Manikmaya incarnating on Semar, automatically Batara Bayu was also admitted as a son by Semar. Sang Hyang Bayu had 5 siblings namely Batara Sambo, Brama, Indra, Vishnu, and Kala. Other siblings from different mothers, namely Batara Cakra, Mahadewa, Asmara, from Mother Dewi Umarakti. Batara Bayu was Bima's real father, so Bima was called Bayu putra (son), Bayusiwi, Bayu Tenaya or Bayusuta. All names have meanings, Batara Bayu's child. Dewi Kunti and Prabu Pandudewanata could not have children because of the curse of Resi Kindama. Kunti thanked to the power of cloning, *Ajian* Hredaya, brought Batara Darma.

## (2) Bima cared for other parties

In Bale Sigala-gala story, Bima saved Ibu Kunthi and the four siblings, Yudistira, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadewa from the burning flames which spread heat in every corner of the candle house that burned it. The incident was allegedly because of Kurawa who wanted the death of Pandawa. Bima swiftly passed through the flash of tongues of fire to set foot in the mouth of the tunnel, then disappeared swallowed by the tunnel hole that was pitch dark and musty. They were rescued by a mongoose of Anantaboga's incarnation so that Pandawa survived from the fire and arrived at Saptapratala (Sudibyoprono, R. Rio, 1991:115-116).

The five siblings, namely Yudistira, Bima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadewa seemed inseparable from the sense of unity and oneness in their social life. They lived in mutual cooperation. A sense of solidarity or tolerance was always fostered among the five of them. If any one of them faced a problem, then they would both feel the problem as the problem of each individual and work on a solution together, so that the unity of values and the benefits of togetherness could be felt. Ibu Kunti always reminded and controlled their togetherness. They were born in a certain place in the palace of Astina in different situations and times, but from childhood to

adulthood they were always educated to be always in harmony to foster unity. Their spirit or the soul of togetherness was always united between thoughts, words, and behaviors/actions. It is like one organ that has been formed in its functional connectivity systematically between one element with another, meaning that one subject to problems will be felt by other parts of the organ. Bima as the strengthener or unifier of the kinship is like a thumb that becomes the strongest grip in building unity without ignoring the role and function of the other four fingers, meaning that without the other fingers it is impossible for the thumb to give that power perfectly.

In a social context, the five sons of Kunti can be analogous to social theology, especially Bima. He was a spiritualist figure who could be regarded as a community's spiritual teacher who became a role model in the sense of being trusted (*digugu*) and being an example (imitated) by the community. At the time of Bima's childhood, Bratasena studied the science of government, especially in the field of arthasastra which in the description gave priority to the people's prosperity on the one hand and the prosperity of the state on the other. Learned by Pandawa and Kurawa children about law enforcement (*dandaniti*), which is a science of dispute resolution efforts (Radenra, I.B., 2007:2). In law enforcement, it is not just giving punishment to certain people for evil actions, but the most important thing is to provide social education in the form of education throughout the life (long life education) in order to strengthen the social structure on a massive scale, because people who behave like an evil appear at any time beyond the predictions of the general public, in every location and condition. Therefore, the community is given an ongoing understanding in order to have the awareness to apply the three words in their lives, namely thinking, saying, and acting honestly as the basis for realizing social order. A person's awareness is never independent and cannot be separated from the reality outside it. Awareness is always about something. Reality can be built through awareness. There is an inherent interdependence between awareness and reality. Representation is always related to reality and must be referred to, so that reality is in accordance with its existence (Sugiharto in Adlin, 2006:9).

Bima's awareness representation only revealed when he received learning materials of thirty-five (35) formations of defense or attack that were trained repeatedly by Bagawan Drona together with Pandawa and Kurawa about skills or the science of national defense in the war strategy category when they were teenagers. . In Bratayudha war, only ten (10) core defense or attack formations were applied by Pandawa and Kurawa for soldiers in both camps. The ten formations are as follows.

- (1) Wukir-sagara wyuha (coral hills and sea water waves).
- (2) Wajratiksna wyuha (a kind of trident weapon).
- (3) Kagapati wyuha (eagle).
- (4) Gajendramatta wyuha (army of elephants).
- (5) Chakra wuha (chakra weapon).
- (6) Makara Wyuha (Scorpion).
- (7) Sucimukha wuha (needle-shaped).
- (8) Padma wyuha (lotus flower).
- (9) Ardhcandra wyuha (crescent).
- (10) Right wyuha (circular warrior layer) (Wirjosuparto, R.M. Supto, 1968:30).

Bima was not satisfied with getting a war strategy education, so he wanted to continue his spiritual studies to get guidance, so that he begged Guru Drona of Kanuragan. As a teacher for the kingdom of Astina, it seems that it was not appropriate enough to be rejected, so Bimasena was directed to look for the wind center (*susuhing angin*) that was in Forest Reksa Muka. Bima went to look for it. According to the authors, Bima was told to go to the forest to find social construction spaces. Yet, the fact was that the forest was deserted, habitat for all kinds of savage and wild animals. The situation was sometimes scary. This is in accordance with the opinion Massey to put forward five arguments for social space. Space is (1) a social construction, (2) it is spatially constructed, (3) it is not static because it is formed by constantly changing social relations, (4) it is related to the construction of power and symbolism, (5) social space is expanded simultaneously; overlapping, side by side, paradoxical relations or antagonism may occur (in Barker, 2005:384).

#### IV. BIMA HAD SACRAL DIMENSIONS

The figure of Bima when he has an orientation in the sacred world can be analogous to a cosmic man who views life in a society as compared to having a relationship with an extended family that originated from a belief system in God. Bima is a figure who has a high awareness of personal success in the present and the future. In a story entitled "Bima Suci" (The Sacred Bima), Bima became a priest, a holy figure. In addition, it had become Bima's personal sacred commitment to unite thoughts, words, and provisions (*manunggaling Bayu, Sabda, Idep*), that the ideal of uniting the family must be realized even though there are various obstacles in the way, all obstacles or obstacles do not let the spirit down, but sought a way out.

When Bima wanted to get Kanuragan from Bagawan Drona's teacher, only Bima wanted to get it while the other Drona's students like Kurawa and other Pandawa had no ideas or desires to obtain Kanuragan. Seeing Bima's will so seriously, Bagawan Drona also greeted him with high enthusiasm. Drona advised Bima to go to Forest Reksa Muka, which literally means the message, suggestion, or command, which means to preserve (Javanese: *openana*) your face, because there are eyes, nose, ears and mouth. Four (4) elements that form the structure of the face also determine the behavior, even the character of life. Everything that can be seen by the eyes, inhaled by the nose, heard by the ears, and tasted with the tongue through the mouth can or talk about good things because it can affect perception and direct behavior.

When often seeing the goodness of action and natural beauty or cultural engineering, then his behavior tends to serve the good and praise the beauty, because the beauty is a friend of goodness. If you often smell fragrant then people will become worshippers of fragrance as a truth. If people often hear the words of good value, then people are encouraged to do good, and if the diet is not good, it will interfere with their health. When Bima was suggested by Guru Drona to look for wind *gung susuhing angin* wood (the center/source of wind), he did not find in the forest, because Bima had not yet been clearly formulated the purpose, direction, and purpose of his wishes. *Gung susuhing angin* wood is the natural forest of the universe (macrocosm) which is the center of the world's lungs to get energy from negative ions and clean air, while the source/center of wind in the small universe (microcosm) is in the human lung organs. Drona's message or suggestion to Bima might be interpreted or told to meditate. The forest is a symbol of silence. In silence arises a feeling of calm, comfort, peace, serenity and various kinds of imagination about many frightening things such as giant disturbances or the possibility of wild animal attacks disturbing the minds of meditators like Bima in this case Dewaruci's story.

Dewaruci's story is more or less the same as the Bima Suci. Both are categorized as philosophical stories (*lakon lebet*), but the same essence, that is equally seeking sacred water from the ocean. Bima Suci or Dewaruci story tells about the journey of Bima in search of Tirta Pawitra (sacred water) on Drona's directions. Water in the Balinese socio-religious paradigm is seen as having sacred values and reflecting the occult element (Goris, 1984:9). That means water is important for human life as is Bima who opened the space of consciousness with the wind and fire which is always united in the origin of the universe to uncover the secrets of life to overcome earthly ties and to find a point of balance. Sacred water, wind, and fire are life energy found in Bima through the form of Bima *khalik* called Dewaruci, the opening of consciousness space. Therefore, Dewaruci is a symbol of the existence of the Divine nature that Bima felt when he was one with Dewaruci's holy body. An unlimited ocean was seen there. The depth was immeasurable, deep blue water with strong waves. The holy qiblah shines and the light of the emptiness (*awang-uwung*) symbolizes the sacred journey of searching for God, Bima realized as the essence of God (Soetarno, 1989:24).

Bima was sitting cross-legged, worshipping, and speaking by *krama hinggil* (subtle Javanese). His attitude deviated from the habit, because Bima was not accustomed to speaking manners and his attitude remained upright with his hands on his hips. At that time, Bima felt very small in front of Dewaruci. Bima's power, intelligence, might, wisdom, and existence were as small as an atom when faced with power, intelligence, wisdom, and the existence of a transcendental eternal God. Consequently, as humans we must communicate, worship, and surrender to the creator through faith (Soetarno, 1995: 82-83).

When Bima was in the holy body of Dewaruci, he witnessed various events such as Pancamaya, Catur warna, Hastawarna, and Pramana. In the human body, there are senses that are capable of responding to their creations which are neatly stored in the heartstrings. The place of response is a colorful shadow called Pancamaya that occurs because of the senses. Pancamaya (five images) is the heart's content in the form of patterns of life experiences that guide human bodies to true glory. Unlike *catur warna* –black, red, yellow, and white as the base of the human mind and color human characters. Whoever is free from the three colors namely black, yellow, and red, will attain true release, return to the origin of all events and return to God when death comes. The black color is coloring glamour, stupidity, rage. Red colors the actions that encourage lust and is unwise. Yellow colors human actions leading to destruction and obstruct safety. White color refers to true purity and happiness. If white can compensate for the three including black, yellow, and red colors, Catur warna will disappear and the behavior will be colored by eight colors (Hastawarna).

The essence of eight colors is a mirror of the eight characteristics found in the universe that can be responded to by the senses and stored as Pancamaya in the heart. Between the big world, the universe, and the small world, namely Pancamaya which is stored in the heartstrings, it is not different from hastawarna (*hastabrata*) meaning eight main practices consisting of the sun, moon, stars, earth, water, sea, wind, and fire. In the heartstrings of human, *hastabrata* becomes the power of strength, beauty, consistency, patience, purity, capacity, accuracy, and harmony. In the human body, *hastawarna* (*hastabrata*) is an inseparable unity and oneness, like the heart and pulse as long as the body is still alive, *Pramanain* body. As long as the body is still alive, *Pramana* does not eat, drink and sleep, but is still alert. *Hastabrata* (*hastawarna*) describes part of the attributes of God The Almighty as a human unity called *sukma*. This soul supports the soul with *pramana* as the intermediary. When a human dies, the *prama* disappears from the body. Thus, his body is dead, but the soul and the body carry each other alive in an all-wise world, there is no sadness, no hunger, sleepiness, there is only

satisfaction (Soetarno, 1991: 84). From the description above, it can be understood that the existence of human beings in the world does not exist by itself, but is made into God. The nature of God is transcendent while humans as humans are immanent creatures. However, humans can further unite with their God as described in the story of Bimasuci (Soetarno, 1991:85).

## V. FIGURES



**Picture 1**

Bratasena/Young Bima

Puppet Creations and Collections of Dr. Bambang Suwarno

Photo: I Nyoman Murtana



**Picture 2**

Bagawan Drona

Collection of Dr. Bambang Suwarno, S.Kar., M.Hum

Photo: I Nyoman Murtana



**Picture 3**

Bratasena

Collection of Dr. Bambang Suwarno, S.Kar., M.Hum.

Photo: Dr. I Nyoman Murtana

## VI. CLOSING

### 1. Conclusion

- a. One's identity cannot be separated from the involvement of others. When new born, he was named Bima. The one giving the name was unknown, because of it was an occult sound. Busana bang bintulu was also given by another person, Batari Uma, Batara Guru's wife. Great power is the request of Pandudewanata's father to Kunti, the Batara Bayu gift, a symbol of the power god. Gajahsena who succeeded in breaking Bima's placenta was violently attacked by Bima to death and his spirit fused with Bima's body, making the power more powerful. Since then he has been named Bimasena. Bima means brave and rude, but with a noble heart. He was named Bratasena, Werkudara, Bayusuta, or Bayusunu.
- b. Bima cared about other parties. He really loved his family. Evidently Bima carried his mother, brother, and younger siblings out of the flames that burned down the candle house where the party took place to be rescued to saptapratala. Bima was very respectful to Guru Drona who gave lessons in governance, war strategy, kanuragan and spiritual life.
- c. Bima followed instructions of Guru Drona to look for *Guh Susuhing angin* wood in Forest Reksa Muka. His efforts failed to meet Giant Rukmuka and Rukmakala. Bima was bearded. They lost and transformed back into their original form as Batara Indra and Bayu. Bima continued his journey in search of *Tirta Pawitra* at the bottom of ocean, attacked by a serpent. Bima fainted, but gradually woke up. At that time, Dewaruci appeared before him. Bima worshipped and spoke softly, having dialogue about the nature of life and finding eight divine lights, the light of God with all its power to devote them in the mortal world.

### 2. Criticism and Suggestions

This paper could not be separated from deficiencies, both sentences and thoughts in the form of conceptual and theories. Therefore, criticisms and suggestions are needed from readers for future improvement.

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